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STATE FOR ISN/CB, VCI/CCA, L/NPV, NEA/I
SECDEF FOR OSD/GSA/CN,CP>
JOINT STAFF FOR DD PMA-A FOR WTC
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NSC FOR LUTES
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TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [CWC](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: CWC: IRAQI AMBASSADOR WARNS COMMITMENT TO CHEMICAL
WEAPONS CONVENTION SHIFTING IN IRAQ

REF: A. MIKULAK-BANAA LETTER OF 4 JANUARY 2010 WITH
REPORT ON RECOVERED AND DESTROYED
CHEMICAL WEAPONS LOCATED IN THE
REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

[B](#). 09 THE HAGUE 768

[C](#). 09 THE HAGUE 738

Classified By: Janet E. Beik for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

This is CWC-1-10.

[1](#). (C) SUMMARY. The Iraqi Ambassador to the Netherlands Siamand Banaa requested Delrep to convey his concerns "to the highest level" of the U.S. government that commitment by his government to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is declining and could "shift" with the upcoming elections. He believes strong U.S. and international support for an agreed plan and timetable for the destruction of remaining chemical weapons in Iraq is essential to keep Iraq from reversing course. END SUMMARY.

[2](#). (C) Delrep met with Ambassador Siamand Banaa after his return to The Hague on January 8 to deliver the report on Recovered and Destroyed Chemical Weapons Located in the Republic of Iraq (February - August 2009) (Ref A) and to discuss the upcoming meetings of visiting Iraqi and U.S. experts with the Technical Secretariat (TS) of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) (Refs B and C).

[3](#). (C) Banaa opened the meeting by asking when the U.S. would have a new Ambassador/Permanent Representative to the OPCW. When Delrep replied that no nomination has yet been made, Banaa asked if she would then convey an important confidential message to the "highest policy levels" of the U.S. government. He, like all other Iraqi ambassadors, is about to be re-assigned and will likely return to Baghdad. He did not know who might be replacing him in The Hague but is very concerned that the progress made to date in Iraq's accession and implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention might be stalled or reversed. He described the mood in Baghdad as "hardening" against the CWC and the current government's commitment to destroy the remnants of Saddam Hussein's CW program. He noted that 450 Egyptian engineers that were involved in that program have

"disappeared." A new government following the elections in March might walk away from the commitment Iraq made a year ago to join the Convention and complete CW destruction.

¶4. (C) Banaa's solution to hold back such a possibility is to have in place an agreed plan with concrete interim goals and a timetable for the destruction of the remaining chemical weapons and former facilities in Iraq. Essential to such a plan, in his view, is U.S. and other international support, both politically and financially, for chemical weapons destruction. He warned that some in his government would be quite willing to blame the U.S. and others for historical responsibility for the CW program rather than accepting, as the current Iraqi government has done, Iraq's responsibility for its own past. He hinted that some other governments would be very sympathetic to such a view.

¶5. (C) On the recovered weapons report (Ref A), Banaa stated that he would seek instructions from his government on making Qthat he would seek instructions from his government on making the required report to the OPCW. He asked if the report had been delivered yet in Baghdad and to whom. Delrep said she had not seen confirmation of delivery in Baghdad, but noted that the visiting U.S. delegation the following week would be able to answer questions on the report and to meet bilaterally, if necessary.

¶6. (C) On the possibility of the initial visit by the OPCW Technical Secretariat (TS) to Iraq, Banaa felt a visit would not be possible until after the March elections. Delrep noted that the TS views the trilateral meetings January 12-13 as an opportunity for progress in planning to report to the Executive Council in February (Ref B), in lieu of the TS

visit to Baghdad. Banaa agreed that the upcoming meetings are important but said that the expected Iraqi delegation is too "junior" and uninformed to make any decisions. Everything will have to be sent back to Baghdad, he said.

¶7. (C) Banaa then launched into a litany of complaints about Dr. Al Sharaa, head of the Iraqi National Monitoring Authority, describing him as not being "serious" about the upcoming meetings because he is sending new people who "don't even speak English" and have not been involved in OPCW issues, rather than coming himself. Al Sharaa, he said, has wanted exclusive control of not just the chemical account but the nuclear one as well and has not delegated real responsibility to anyone else. This is why, Banaa opined, "Nothing gets done." Banaa has tried to identify key actors in each relevant office to coordinate CWC action and to provide continuity from one international meeting to the next, "but they keep sending new people." Al Sharaa, he believes, has an eye on the spotlight and would like to become a minister in the post-election government.

¶8. (C) DEL COMMENT. While the frictions between Banaa and Al Sharaa, and the lack of coordination in the Iraqi government on OPCW matters, have been more than evident here in The Hague, Del has no means of evaluating Banaa's comments on the political waters in Baghdad and the future prospects in Iraq for the CWC. We pass his warning on for what it is worth.

¶9. (C) COMMENT CONTINUED. Banaa's point about the narrow window for action on a destruction plan for Iraq, however, is worth highlighting. OPCW, too, faces a large turnover in expertise during 2010, starting with a new Director-General in July and most likely a new Director for Verification, a key position for CW destruction planning. A new Iraqi ambassador and new ministers in Baghdad will inevitably face a learning curve on CWC issues, even without political shifts. Moving forward as briskly as possible on a plan for destruction, and lining up appropriate international assistance, as well as political support among Executive Council member states, will be critical in the months ahead.

¶10. (U) BEIK SENDS.
MANN